

**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

**Leola School District
Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process Report 2005-2006**

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Dates of On Site Visit: November 1, 2005

Date of Report: December 2, 2005

This report contains the results of the steering committee's self-assessment and the validation of the self-assessment by the Special Education Programs. The report addresses six principles – General Supervision, Free Appropriate Public Education, Appropriate Evaluation, Procedural Safeguards, Individualized Education Program and Least Restrictive Environment. Each principle is rated based on the following scale:

Promising Practice	The district/agency exceeds this requirement through the implementation of innovative, high-quality programming and instructional practices.
Meets Requirements	The district/agency consistently meets this requirement.
Needs Improvement	The district/agency has met this requirement but has identified areas of weakness that left unaddressed may result in non-compliance.
Out of Compliance	The district/agency consistently does not meet this requirement.
Not applicable	In a small number of cases, the standard may not be applicable for your district/agency. If an item is not applicable, the steering committee should briefly explain why the item is NA. Example – no private schools within the district boundaries.

Principle 1 – General Supervision
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General supervision means the school district's administrative responsibilities to ensure federal and state regulations are implemented and a free appropriate public education is provided for each eligible child with a disability. The specific areas addressed in principle one are child find, referral procedures, children voluntarily enrolled by parents in private schools, students placed by the school district, improving results through performance goals and indicators (assessment, drop out, graduation), professional development, suspension and expulsion rates.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data Sources used:

Surveys
Comprehensive Plan
TAT and referral information
LEA flow through fund information
Data Tables
Child Find Information
Staff certification

Promising Practice:

Based on the child find information the Steering Committee concluded the school district utilizes interagencies in child find through active roles in pre-school screenings. Colony preschool children are transported by the district to the screening location annually. In 2005 the screening was considerably provided at the colony for the convenience of the colony. The district's screens a significant number of pre-schoolers annually.

The TAT team is effectively utilized to help teachers work with students' difficulties while addressing potential need for special education.

Meets Requirements:

Based on the data the Steering Committee concludes that the district meets all requirements of Child Find. The Steering Committee concludes TATs are utilized appropriately, referral documentations were contained in all and referring procedures were continuously followed.

The Steering Committee concludes that the district has met the requirements of using data-based decision-making procedures to review and analyze school district-level data to determine if the school district is making progress toward the state's performance goals and indicators.

The district meets all suspension and expulsion rate requirements. No students with disabilities have been removed.

Committee concludes all requirements were met when the school district refers or places a child with disabilities in a private school or facility, the school does ensure special education and related services are provided in accordance with requirements of Individuals with Disabilities Act

The district meets the requirements as the district employs qualified personnel and provides training for personnel.

Data indicates appropriate development trainings are arranged for personnel. Special education needs assessment surveys have been distributed annually to all personnel via e-mail.

The committee concludes all requirements were met as no private schools are located within the district.

Needs Improvement:

There are no evaluation recorded for paraprofessionals and assistants.

Validation Results**Meets Requirements**

Both the child find activities and the TAT process are seen by the monitoring team as areas that meet requirements rather than being promising practices.

Based on interviews with school personnel, the review team agrees with all areas that the Leola's steering committee felt met requirements, with the exception of the district meets the requirements of employing qualified personnel.

Based on interviews with school personnel, the review team believes that the lack of an evaluation recorded for paraprofessionals and assistants is not mandated, thus it is not an area that needs improvement.

Areas out of compliance

ARSD :05:16:01.02. Adequate supply of qualified personnel. The division's comprehensive system of personnel development shall include an analysis of state and local needs for professional development for personnel to serve children with disabilities. The analysis shall include, at a minimum:

- (1) The number of personnel providing special education and related services;
- (2) Relevant information on current and anticipated personnel vacancies and shortages, including the number of individuals described in subdivision (1) with temporary certification; and
- (3) Relevant information on the extent of certification or retraining necessary to eliminate these shortages that is based, to the maximum extent possible, on existing assessments of personnel needs.

Based on interviews with school personnel, the review team found that the Leola district does not employ a certified early childhood special education teacher in spite of the fact they have children in an early childhood setting who must be served by a qualified individual.

ARSD 24:05:22:03 Certified child.

A certified child is a child in need of special education or special education and related services who has received a multidisciplinary evaluation and has an individual education program formulated and approved by a local placement committee.

Based on the evaluations given, the review team was unable to verify eligibility or educational impact for a child currently being served. While there were references to a doctor's evaluation, actual scores were not reported. The district needs to conduct a comprehensive evaluation in all areas of suspected disability and determine eligibility and educational need. The district needs to either complete a comprehensive evaluation in all areas of suspected disabilities or obtain additional information from the doctor's evaluation to allow an informed decision about the student's eligibility and the educational impact of the child who is currently being served.

Principle 2 – Free Appropriate Public Education

All eligible children with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. The specific areas addressed in principle two are the provision of FAPE to children residing in group homes, foster homes, or institutions, making FAPE available when a child reaches his/her 3rd birthday and providing FAPE to eligible children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school for more than 10 cumulative days.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

Comprehension Plan
Surveys
Data Tables
File Reviews

Meets Requirements

Based on the data provided the Committee concludes that district meets the requirements for FAPE as no students are placed out of the district at this time, 3 year olds are transitioned from part C to part B and education is provided with no cost to the parent.

Based on the data provided by the district, no children/students were suspended or expelled from school. The committee concludes the district has met the requirements.

Validation Results

Meets Requirements

Based on interviews with school personnel, the review team agrees with all areas that the Leola's steering committee felt meets requirements.

Principle 3 – Appropriate Evaluation

A comprehensive evaluation is conducted by a team of knowledgeable staff, which also includes parental input. A valid and reliable evaluation will result in effective individualized education programs for eligible students. The specific areas addressed in principle three are written notice and consent for evaluation, evaluation procedures and instruments, eligibility determination, reevaluation and continuing eligibility.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

File reviews
Surveys
Comprehensive plan
Data Tables
Parental Prior Notice form

Promising Practice:

The district has had no Due Process Hearings in the past 6 years. The district wishes to resolve issues.

Meets Requirements

Based on the data from file reviews and prior notice form the district has met requirements for consent.

The district ensures the evaluation or reevaluation procedures and instruments meet the minimum requirements with the exception of documentation of conducting and reporting functional assessments.

The committee concluded that the school district ensures the proper identification of students with disabilities through the evaluation process, with the exception of functional assessments.

Based on the given data the committee concludes that the requirements are met with needed improvement in the following areas:

Needs Improvement:

Documentation of parent input into re-evaluation.

Areas out of compliance

Functional assessments were documented in the Parental Prior Notice sent to parents but evidence of the completion of these assessments could not be found.

The data indicated that the district is not conducting functional evaluations as part of comprehensive evaluation process. File reviews indicated that files containing Parental Prior Notice indicating that functional assessments were to be conducted did not hold a functional report supporting the claim of the evaluation.

Validation Results

Meets Requirements

The fact that the Leola district has had no Due Process Hearings in the past 6 years is commendable, but the monitoring team sees this as an area that meet requirements rather than being a promising practice.

Parent input into re-evaluation is seen by the monitoring team as an area that meets requirements rather than being an area that needs improvement.

Needs Improvement

The manner in which the district conducts functional assessment is seen by the monitoring team as an area that needs improvement rather than being an area that is out of compliance.

Principle 4 – Procedural Safeguards

Parents of children with disabilities have certain rights available. The school makes parents aware of these rights and makes sure they are understood. The specific areas addressed in principle four are adult student/transfer of rights, content of rights, consent, written notice, confidentiality and access to records, independent educational evaluation (IEE), complaint procedures, and due process hearings.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

Comprehensive Plan
Parental Rights Document
Parental Prior Notice form
Local Paper Publications
School Handbooks/FERPA

Meets Requirements:

The district provides the parents of a child in need of special education or special education and related services with the opportunity to inspect and review all educational records concerning the identification, evaluation, and educational placement of the child and the provision of a free appropriate public education.

The committee concludes the district provides the parents of a child in need of special education or special education and related services with the opportunity to inspect and review all educational records concerning the identification, evaluation, and educational placement of the child and the provision of a free appropriate public education.

The Leola district ensures that parents are informed of their parental rights under Individuals with Disabilities Act.

The Leola district has policies and procedures in place for responding to complaint actions that ensure compliance.

The Leola district ensures that parents have been fully informed in their native language or another mode of communication (if necessary) of all information relevant to the activity for which consent is sought.

Due to the district size and the procedure stated in the comprehensive Plan, the committee concludes the district meets the requirements regarding the appointment of surrogate parent, even though there isn't an established list available.

Needs Improvement:

Based on the data available the district does not have a list of possible surrogate parents at this time.

Validation Results**Meets Requirements**

Based on interviews with school personnel, the review team agrees with all areas that the Leola steering committee felt meets requirements with the exception of having a list of surrogate parents.

Areas out of compliance**ARSD 24:05:30:15 Surrogate parent**

Each school district shall establish procedures for the assignment of a surrogate parent to ensure that the rights of the child are protected if no parent can be identified and the district, after reasonable effort, cannot discover the whereabouts of a parent or if the child is a ward of the state. The district shall ensure that the person selected as a surrogate has no interest that conflicts with the interest of the child the surrogate represents and has the knowledge and skills that ensure representation of the child. The district is responsible for the training and certification of surrogate parents and shall maintain a list of persons who may serve as surrogate parents. A person assigned to be a surrogate parent may not be an employee of a public agency that is involved in the education or care of the child.

Through interviews and file reviews, the monitoring team decided that the district has not trained or certified surrogate parents and does not have a list of individuals who may serve as surrogate parents.

Principle 5 – Individualized Education Program

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written document for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed and revised by the IEP team, which includes the parent. The specific areas addressed in principle five are IEP team, IEP content, transition components for secondary IEPs, annual reviews, transition from early intervention program, and IEP related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

Comprehensive Plan

Surveys

Data Tables

Teacher File Reviews

File Review

Meets Requirements:

Based on the file reviews the district gives adequate notice, invites parent and students in transition, includes requirements in Parental Prior Notice therefore, meet the requirements of written notice.

Based on file reviews, transition evaluations, checklists, interest inventories, etc. were completed. Outcome for independent living and employment were documented. Transition services needed were documented in the files.

Based on the reviewed files the IEP cover page was complete with all required information. Annual goals, student's progress toward goals, modifications/supports, assessment participation, related services, and extent of participation in classroom were all include appropriately.

The steering committee concludes the district has met these requirements as the IEP is in effect immediately, copies of IEP and evaluations given to parents and IEPs are conducted at least annually.

The district ensures the IEP team is comprised of appropriate team membership and meets all identified responsibilities with the exception of other agencies invitations to transitional meetings.

Needs Improvement:

Based on the file reviews of students in transition, the district does not always invite representatives from other agencies to the meetings.

Based on file reviews the district did not consistently contain adequate information in the present level of performance. Limited information was provided in the present level of performance in 2 of the 19 files.

Based on files reviewed the district did not thoroughly complete the transition plan page on 2 of 2 files.

Areas out of compliance

Parent input was not documented in the present level of performance in 5 files reviewed.

It was determined that the district did not request agencies to participate in transitional meetings and did not seek other means to obtain their participation therefore, the committee agrees these requirements have not been met.

Validation Results

Meets Requirements

Based on interviews with school personnel and file reviews, the monitoring team agrees with all areas that the Leola's steering committee felt meet requirements.

Areas that need improvement

Parent input was not documented in the present level in only 2 out of 13 files; therefore the monitoring team saw parental input as needs improvement rather than out of compliance.

Areas out of compliance

ARSD 24:05:27:01.03. Content of individualized education program

Each student's individualized education program shall include a statement of the student's present levels of educational performance.

The monitoring team determined that the present levels of performance did not include the transition component (3 out of 3 students of transition age). Additionally, student strengths and weaknesses were not consistently reported nor based on functional information. As a result, IEP goals were not always measurable and observable.

Principle 6 – Least Restrictive Environment
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After the IEP is developed or reviewed, the IEP team must decide where the IEP services are to be provided. Consideration begins in the general education classroom for school age students. The specific areas addressed in principle six are placement decisions, consent for initial placement, least restrictive environment procedures, preschool children, and LRE related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

File reviews
Surveys
Data Tables
Comprehensive Plan
IEP document

Promising Practice:

According to the most recent data from Table I in 2003 18 of 20 students were in the regular classroom with modifications. 2 of the 20 students were in early childhood settings.

Meets Requirements:

Based on the data tables, surveys, file reviews and IEP document the committee concludes the Least Restrictive Environment requirements have been met.

Validation Results

Meets Requirements:

Having special education students participate with their none disabled peers is seen by the monitoring team as an area that meets requirements rather than being promising practices.

The review team agrees with the Leola steering committee that Least Restrictive Environment requirements have been met.